

# SEISHUN EIGA

Coming of Age in the Kokusaika



## JAPN 330: JAPANESE FILM

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& by appointment

### Kōreika 高齢化

A companion term to shōshika, kōreika characterizes Japan as a nation with an “aging population.” Currently, Japan has the highest percentage (proportionally) of senior citizens in the world and projections suggest that by 2060, 40% of the country will be aged over 65.

### Shōshika 少子化:

Japan’s population (racially defined as Japanese specifically) continues to decline due to low birth rates. The term shōshika literally points to a shift in decreasing children, but is sometimes figuratively translated to convey a “culture without children.” The calculated rate does not include immigrants.

### Nihonjinron 日本人論:

Dominant discourse since the end of the Pacific War, Nihonjinron is a term that refers to discussions or theories about “being Japanese” that concerns cultural, racial, and national Japanese identity and psychology that typically insist on shared homogeneity and uniqueness.

### Mono no aware 物の哀れ:

Invented by 18th century scholar Norinaga Motoori, this term continues to be an aesthetic dominant in Japanese art. Connected to the idea of mujō, the impermanence of all things, mono no aware highlights the beauty of temporary existence and the bittersweet sadness of inevitable endings.

### Seishun eiga 青春映画:

“Youth films” have been a staple of Japanese cinema screens in the 1990s and 2000s, but very few have made waves overseas. Largely featuring the lives of teenagers and schoolyard dramas, the films attract older domestic audiences drawn by a nostalgia for an imaginary shared youth.

### Kokusaika 国際化:

A government agenda, especially in higher education (e.g. the JET Program, study abroad exchanges) since the 1980s, Japan has invested in kokusaika programs to boost its economy and presence on the global stage (see also: Cool Japan). Multilingualism, interracial relationships, and migration is on the rise.

This course is:

- ① taught in Japanese (with a prerequisite of JAPN 203) that is designed as
- ② an introduction to Japanese cinema based on the practices of
- ③ formal analysis and visual literacy. Get ready to learn another language.

### Course Introduction:

Over the next ten weeks we will explore how Japanese filmmakers are creating increasingly diverse representations of contemporary Japan through coming-of-age stories that feature children and young adults. These depictions challenge a notion of a homogenous nation, of a homogenous people with one identity and one history, and reframe the country as a collection of diverse identities and cultures that more accurately reflect a nation in the process of internationalization or *kokusaika*. Each week we will encounter an aspect of diversity, sometimes familiar to an American audience and sometimes unexpected, from ethnicity and sexuality to language and the body.



### General Course Objectives

#### 1) Japanese language practice.

Although this class is taught in Japanese, this is not a Japanese language class. Rather, this is an opportunity to apply your extant Japanese in tackling goals atypical of the language classroom. In other words, this class is an exercise of language *in practice*. Completion of JAPN 203 is a prerequisite for enrollment. Even so, we have a range of Japanese language ability levels in the class. As such I have designed a structure that will hopefully accommodate our vast range such that every student in the class will have a meaningful and instructive experience. To this end, when assessing your participation and assigned work, I am more interested in developing ideas and self-expression than grammar exercises in this course.

#### 2) An introduction to Japanese cinema.

This class approaches Japanese cinema not as a foray into culture studies, but as an educational experience in Japanese cinema as a field of study in its own right.

It is my hope that you will develop an interest in Japanese cinema and visual studies, learning to appreciate the medium as a culturally-specific art form. That said, in just ten short weeks we are only encountering the tip of a massive, majestic iceberg. I encourage you to continue to discover Japanese cinema in all genres, past and present.

#### 3) An introduction to film analysis and visual literacy.

We live in a world more saturated with images than with the written word. And yet, most of our educational system, from grade school to higher ed, is focused on analysis of word-based texts. Visual literacy is competency in understanding how visual images are constructed and how they are used as a form of perception-shaping communication. Visual images can communicate ideas and messages, establish cultural norms, shape our understanding of the world, and challenge perspectives. They do more work in our contemporary society to shape our world view than any other medium. Isn't it time we learn how to "read" them?

As we learn to understand films through the language of filmmaking, it is important that we remember that all films, their content and communications, are an imaginary construction of a group of creators (director, actors, editor, technicians, producers, etc.). Film, though embodied by real people in often real locations, is not a reflection of reality or society. However, in creating as realistic and seamless an experience as possible, filmmakers often tap into normative notions and representations of culture and society, both subconsciously and consciously. Part of the task and art of filmmaking is to make viewers forget that they are watching a series of still images projected at a rate that fools the eye into seeing motion and, ergo, "reality!" It is our task to 1) remember that what we see is fabricated fiction and 2) understand that what we take for granted as "realistic" is the result of cultural conditioning. In other words, we can't "know Japan" by watching Japanese cinema, but we can know **ideas about** Japan.

### Japanese Program Student Learning Outcomes

Successful completion of Japanese 330 satisfies 4 elective credits for the Japanese Major. Additionally, the course addresses the following Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) defined by the Japanese program:

- A-3 Students will understand the natural speech patterns of Japanese in a variety of formats and on various non-technical topics.
- B-5 Students will have a general grasp of the geographical, historical, social, and political dimensions of Japanese culture.
- B-7 Students will be aware of sociolinguistic variations of the Japanese language, such as dialectal and gender differences, and how they relate to Japanese culture.
- C-9 Students will be able to compare and contrast the linguistic features of the Japanese language with those of American English.
- C-10 Students will be able to compare and contrast the literary and cultural perspectives of Japanese speakers with their own.
- C-11 Students will be able to compare and contrast the cultural identities of Japanese speakers with their own.

### Global Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to connect two or more cultures historically or in contemporary contexts with some acknowledgement of power structures, demonstrating respectful interaction with varied cultures and perspectives.

Students will rethink “Japan” as a complex confluence of diverse cultures and peoples as we expand our ideas about diversity to include experiences contextualized by race, ethnicity, socio-linguistics, body types, sexualities, non-heteronormative life courses, class, and regionalism.

### Assessment of Learning

Screening journal in English or Japanese (3 entries <i>must</i> be in Japanese)		30%
Quizzes		20%
Participation		25%
Final Project		25%
↑ Thesis	2.5%	
↓ Draft	10%	
↓ Video Essay	12.5%	
A 94-100	A- 90-93.9	B+ 87-89.9
B 84-86.9	B- 80-83.9	C+ 77-79.9
C 74-76.9	C- 70-73.9	D+ 67-69.9
D 64-66.9	D- 60-63.9	F 0-59.9

You will keep a screening journal in either English or Japanese throughout the term. However, at least three of the entries must be written in Japanese. You will have a prompt each week and will be responsible for writing a total of nine entries (three in Japanese). You are not being evaluated on the accuracy of your Japanese, but rather on the depth of your reflections. For language accuracy and practice, you are encouraged to work with the department tutors.

### Quizzes

On most Tuesdays, we will have a short quiz on Japanese terms relevant to that week’s discussion and film viewing as well as on key concepts from the weekend readings. **There are no quiz makeups.**

### Participation

Thursdays are committed to class discussions. As a discussion intensive course, you will be evaluated on your participation in both small group work and whole-class discussions. You will receive feedback at the midterm so that you have an opportunity to adjust your level of activity in the class to improve your grade (if so necessary).

### Final Project

In lieu of a traditional final paper, you will script and edit a video essay either on your own or as a pair. The project is designed to reinforce your Japanese ability (both written and verbal) and to display the visual literacy techniques you have learned throughout the course. There are three graded components to the project: the thesis, the script draft, and the final essay. We will watch all the video essays as a film festival during the scheduled final exam time. Attendance to the screening is mandatory.



### Learning Differences

If you have a documented learning difference or special circumstances and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please contact the disAbility Resources for Students (My DRS) office within the first week of class. Their website can be found at <http://www.wvu.edu/drs/> or you may speak with a staff member in person at their office in Old

Main 120. You may also email the office at [drs@wwu.edu](mailto:drs@wwu.edu). I also encourage you to meet with me early on in the term to make necessary arrangements and discuss your individual needs for success.

### Professor Availability

Speaking in person is always best, so please stop by during my office hours. If you have a scheduling conflict, we can arrange an appointment for another time that suits us both.

### Email

I will endeavor to respond to student emails within 48 hours; please do not expect immediate responses.

**I will only answer emails that are written as much as possible in Japanese.**

Even if that sometimes means that you start with コリーン先生、こんにちは and continue in English.

Here are some email guidelines:

- Always start an email with a greeting and always end with your name.
- **Never send me your homework as an attachment without an accompanying message.**
- Ask conceptual or detailed questions in person (in class or during office hours).
- Family emergencies and personal matters are best discussed in person.
- Do not write to ask for your grades. According to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), your professors can't discuss your grades with your parents, your friends, or anyone but you in a private, one-on-one conversation. Email is not considered private.

### Course Interactions

#### Punctuality

Being on time is extremely important in Japan. Of course, punctuality is a practice of respect in many cultures, but being late in Japan is particularly problematic. Tardiness is considered as a personal affront and will change how the person waiting for you thinks about you. It can harm professional and personal relationships. Practice being on time by coming to class on time! Any late arrival to class of 20 minutes or more will be considered an absence. Conversely, you should inform me ahead of time if you need to leave class early.

#### Attendance

There are no points awarded for simply showing up to class. However, your participation will suffer if you are frequently absent from class. You have two free absences (although there are no quiz makeups so

please be careful). If you miss a screening, you are responsible for finding and watching the film on your own. Each absence beyond the first two freebies will lower your participation by a grade: e.g. an A becomes an A- and so on.

### Letters of Recommendation

When asking professors for letters of recommendation, you can't go wrong with these three handy rules: **1)** Make the request in person. If for some reason this is not possible, write your professor a professional email directly. **2)** Supply your professor with the appropriate forms and relevant information. **3)** Always ask for a letter **at least two weeks** before the application deadline.

### Academic Integrity

The official university statement on academic integrity, including accounts of plagiarism, misuse of sources, and cheating can be found here:

<http://libguides.wwu.edu/plagiarism>

Information regarding Academic Integrity can be found at: <http://www.wwu.edu/integrity/> and <http://catalog.wwu.edu/content.php?catoid=5&navoid=463>

I anticipate that you will reach out to friends and tutors for help with the language aspect of this course and that is alright. However, you should not rely on others to generate ideas. All thoughts expressed in your work should be your own.

**Any instance of cheating will result in, at the least, an automatic fail for that assignment or test as well as a one-on-one consultation with me. Particularly egregious situations will result in automatic failure in the course and an official report to the University.**

### Student Services

Western has several services committed to assisting students during times of illness, difficulty, or crisis. Please feel empowered to seek help when you need it!

- For medical concerns, please contact the Health Center: 650-3400 or visit Student Health.
- For emotional or psychological concerns or questions, please contact the Counseling Center: 650-3400 or visit Counseling Center.
- For health and safety concerns, please contact the University Police: 650-3555 or visit University Police.
- For family or personal crisis or emergency, please contact the Dean of Students: 650-3450 or visit Dean of Students.



## Tentative Schedule

### Challenging Traditions

Week 1

火曜日  
3月28日  
  
Introduction

#### In Class

Course introduction  
Background concepts  
Lecture on seishun eiga  
Start **Barber Yoshino**

#### Homework

**Watch:** at least one seishun eiga of your choice (see list for ideas)  
**Journal Entry 1:** Observations about seishun eiga  
**Reading:** Composition

### Composition

木曜日  
3月30日  
  
Discussion

#### In Class

Finish screening **Barber Yoshino**  
話し合い：青春映画について  
話し合い：『バーバー吉野』

#### Homework

**Reading:** Props  
**Reading:** 『トイレット』  
**Quiz Study**

### Crossing Borders Out

Week 2

火曜日  
4月4日  
  
Lecture

#### In Class

Quiz: Reading concepts and 単語  
Lecture on Oigami Naoko and film terms  
Watch: **Toilet** 1 hr. 49 min.

#### Homework

**Journal Entry 2:** Props in *Toilet*

### Props

木曜日  
4月6日  
  
Discussion

#### In Class

話し合い：『トイレット』

#### Homework

**Reading:** Sound  
**Reading:** 『スワロウテイル』  
**Quiz Study**

### Crossing Borders In Racial & Ethnic Diversity

Week 3

火曜日  
4月11日  
  
Lecture

#### In Class

Quiz: Reading concepts and 単語  
Lecture on Iwai Shunji and the economic bubble  
Watch: **Swallowtail Butterfly** 2 hr. 28 min.

#### Homework

**Journal Entry 3:** Sound in *Swallowtail Butterfly*

### Sound

木曜日  
4月13日  
  
Discussion

#### In Class

話し合い：『スワロウテイル』

#### Homework

**Reading:** Editing  
**Reading:** 『ゴ』  
**Quiz Study**

### Racial & Ethnic Diversity

Week 4

火曜日  
4月18日  
  
Lecture

#### In Class

Quiz: Reading concepts and 単語  
Lecture on Zainichi  
Watch: **Go** 2 hr. 2min.

#### Homework

**Journal Entry 4:** Editing in *Go*

### Editing

木曜日  
4月20日  
  
Discussion

#### In Class

話し合い：『ゴ』

#### Homework

**Reading:** Setting  
**Reading:** 『百万円と苦虫女』  
**Quiz Study**

## Life Course Diversity

Week 5

火曜日  
4月25日

Lecture

### In Class

Quiz: Reading concepts and 単語  
Lecture on Japanese “heteronormative life course”  
Watch: **Million Yen Girl** 2 hr. 1 min.

### Homework

**Journal Entry 5:** Setting in *Million Yen Girl*

## Setting

木曜日  
4月27日

Discussion

### In Class

話し合い: 『百万円と苦虫女』

### Homework

**Reading:** Lighting  
**Reading:** 『2つ目の窓』  
**Quiz Study**

## Regional Diversity

Week 6

火曜日  
5月2日

Lecture

### In Class

Quiz: Reading concepts and 単語  
Lecture on Japanese regionalism  
Watch: **Still the Water** 2 hr. 1 min.

### Homework

**Journal Entry 6:** Lighting in *Still the Water*

## Lighting

木曜日  
5月4日

Discussion

### In Class

話し合い: 『2つ目の窓』

On Video Essays

### Homework

**Reading:** Costume  
**Reading:** 『下妻物語』 or 『シコふんじやった』  
**Quiz Study**

## Body Diversity

Week 7

火曜日  
5月9日

Lecture

### In Class

Quiz: Reading concepts and 単語  
Lecture on the body  
Watch Option 1 (2:30) **Kamikaze Girls** 1hr. 45 min.  
Watch Option 2 (4:15) **Sumo do sumo don't** 1hr. 43 min.

### Homework

**Journal Entry 7:** Costuming in (film of your choice)

## Costume

木曜日  
5月11日

Discussion

### In Class

話し合い: 『下妻物語』 x 『シコふんじやった』

Editing Training

### Homework

**Reading:** Acting  
**Reading:** 『カケラ』 or 『独立少年合唱団』  
**Quiz Study**

## Sexual Diversity

Week 8

火曜日  
5月16日

Lecture

### In Class

Quiz: Reading concepts and 単語  
Lecture on representation  
Watch Option 1 (2:30) **Kakera: A Piece of our Life** 1 hr. 47 min.  
Watch Option 2 (4:15) **Boy's Choir** 2 hr. 9 min.

### Homework

**Journal Entry 8:** Video Essay Proposal

## Acting

木曜日  
5月18日

Discussion

### In Class

話し合い: 『カケラ』 x 『独立少年合唱団』

### Homework

**Video Essay Thesis Due by Email @midnight**  
**Reading:** 『フラガール』

## Economic Diversity

Week 9

火曜日  
5月23日

Lecture

### In Class

Quiz: Reading concepts and 単語

Lecture on The Bubble

Watch: **Hula Girls** 2 hr. 1 min.

### Homework

**Video Essay Script**

## Put it Together

木曜日  
5月25日

Discussion

### In Class

話し合い: 『フラガール』

### Homework

Reading: 『舞妓はレディ』

## Linguistic Diversity

Week 10

火曜日  
5月30日

Lecture

### In Class

Quiz: Reading concepts and 単語

Lecture on dialects

Watch: **Lady Maiko** 2 hr. 15 min.

### Homework

Work on your video essays

## Video Essays

木曜日  
5月25日

Video Fest

### In Class

話し合い: 『舞妓はレディ』

Course Evals

### Homework

**Journal Entry 9:** Class reflection

Finish your video essays

**Final Exam Session Thursday, June 8, 1:00 - 3:00 PM: Video Essay Screenings**